1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

sarily bringing about the end of life. Thus dreaming represents a condition in which the soul temporarily leaves the body and "walks around." At this time it may "find out something—what you're gonna do." Should the soul travel too far from its proper locus, the life of the sleeping person may be endangered. Old Man reported that he awoke one night to find his second wife hardly breathing. He chafed her wrists and rolled her body. "Finally wind come out." He asserted that her soul had traveled too far from the body which, as a result, was close to lifelessness. Old Kean referred to the mobility of the soul when he declared: "My tajuš know lots of things. Just like man it go anyplace."

Following the final and permanent alienation of the body and wind, the spirit is believed to linger around the place of death for an indefinite period of time, generally from three days to a week. During this interim period the spirit is regarded as malevolent, being particularly dangerous for children below the age of puberty and to those relatives who have offended the deceased in life.[39] Even a child's spirit presents such danger to living children and especially to surviving siblings. The intent of the spirit is to secure a child to accompany it in the afterworld, while toward relatives who have injured it, the spirit seeks vengeance. Four days following Old Metša's death, Old Man commented on the two fires that had recently broken out, one in Hans Donnelly's line camp and the other in Hans' wife's tent. Although empirical explanations for both accidents were readily advanced and discussed, Old Man thought that Old Metša's spirit was also at work. "This old woman suffer. Nobody cut wood for her. Hans never cut wood for her; nobody come around. . . . Used to be old people believed it." It was pointed out that Hans' tent had burned eleven hours before death occurred. Old Man agreed but added: "Old woman just about all in that morning."

During the period shortly after death, a spirit may also communicate to people through the crackling of burning wood. When this phenomenon is heard, a small piece of bacon or other food is thrown into the stove as an offering to the spirit. Old Man revealed that Lady Suza had been seen to respond to such a signal, while her mother's unburied body remained in camp, by throwing a bit of food into the stove. Following the period of sojourn (or, according to one informant, immediately after death) the spirit travels to the afterworld.

Occasionally spirits return from the afterlife and manifest themselves in human sounds and activities. Sometimes they are also seen in human guise although, lacking tangible existence, they cannot be felt. Fear of ghosts is not an intense or prevalent characteristic of the Kaska. One experience of this kind was noted. Ten days after Old Metša's death, Old Man reported that he, his wife, Lady Suza, and Paulette Connelly were awakened by the sound of footsteps in the snow outside the cabin. A moment later they heard the sound of ripping canvas. Old Man expressed fear that one of the dogs had gotten loose and was breaking into the adjoining tent, where the old woman had died. Paulette arose and lit a candle. As soon as the light appeared, all sounds ceased. Paulette left the house but could find no tracks in the snow. Upon checking the dog shelters, she found all the animals in place. The next morning Old Man looked around, but also failed to locate any tracks. We asked Old Man his opinion of the phenomenon. "I figger maybe ghost come back," he said. "That woman suffer too much."

[39] Compare Opler, *An Interpretation of Ambivalence of Two American Indian Tribes* (1936); Opler, *Further Comparative Anthropological Data Bearing on the Solution of a Psychological Problem* (1938); also Honigmann, *Northern and Southern Athapaskan Eschatology* (1945), 469.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

their possession of power, tracing it to the agency of animals. As near as could be learned, 778
power (which is sometimes called "medicine") denotes that the person is under the pro- 776
tection of an animal supernatural on whose assistance he can rely. Any animal or game bird can bestow such benefits on an individual, who may solicit their interest by isolating himself in the bush. Apparently, however, purposeful isolation is not essential in order to obtain supernatural help, a person sometimes receiving an indication of such attention without any effort on his part. The acquisition of power is signalled by a vision or, perhaps, a dream in which an animal manifesting human attributes speaks to the individual. Sometimes a vision is not readily forthcoming even when solicited and was in fact denied to Nitla who said: "Some people go stay in brush alone. Got medicine. I can't make it, me. I'm too young. I'm just try first time. Nothing see me . . . Something don't want me." He was not disturbed on account of this lack of success.

A different type of supernatural power, one that is more readily talked about, promotes 777
aid and protection. This may be acquired through possession of religious symbols like crucifixes, prayer books, and rosaries. Many people carry such objects on their persons whenever they leave camp. Once Nitla said that he would request the "mission man to give cross for me and wife. Grizzly bear can't bother that one. Somebody say that way. I believe him." Lowering his voice the informant added that a crucifix would also keep a seducer away from a man's wife. It would protect both the husband and woman from sexual aggression. A few weeks later Nitla was seen wearing a rosary around his neck. Small gospels distributed by the priest are also carefully kept. Paulette Donnelly embroidered a moosehide "Bible case" to contain one of these slim volumes.

Occasionally occurrences are interpreted as resulting from a favorable disposition on the part of the supernatural environment. Thus a man may ascribe his luck in killing a moose to the fact that he has had the cooperation of the animal realm. Many more times, however, references to luck are simply offhand mentions of a fate whose character the individual is not troubled to analyze.

Two states of existence are possible for the spirit in the afterlife. For those whose lives 775
were free from evil there is heaven and everlasting happiness; for the evil there is hell. Just as heaven is identified with God, hell is associated with the devil. This correlation of an afterlife with the morality of the spirit's earthly career is not perfect, however, since, regardless of his conduct, any person killed by a grizzly bear must go to the bear's "daddy" —the devil. Although hell is recognized as an unpleasant place, few people admitted any realistic fear of it.

The idea of praying for the welfare of the dead is known to some informants as a result 775
of church attendance. This suggests the beginnings of belief in a third, temporary state of 766
spiritual existence—purgatory. 177

Alongside the idea of spiritual immortality remains a belief in reincarnation, the rebirth 775
of the spirit in a child who, as he grows older, recognizes the world as a place where he has already been. One or two children were mentioned who had revealed this *déjà vue* experience.

Several forms of divination are practiced more or less seriously by a few Indians. 787
Sometimes the leaves in a tea cup are inspected in order to foretell the results of a prospective

out of the house and reentered after the woman has entered. Otherwise the people would have bad luck. 841

DEATH, BURIAL and MORTUARY CUSTOMS.

When a person died the death was at once announced to the people, who assembled and immediately commenced to sing a death chant. Only middle-aged and old people joined in the singing of death chants. If young people sang, they were apt to die early in life. The song was sung in presence of the corpse and the latter was addressed in the song. It is said that sometimes when it seemed sure the person was dying the people assembled beforehand and sang the chant at the death bed. The chief and possibly the only object in singing the death chant was to assist the soul of the dead person to find the trail to the sunrise land, and therefore some thought the singing of the chant at the time of the death rather than afterwards, gave him all the more chance of easily finding the trail. It is said the beginning of the trail is obscure or hard to find and dead people are liable to have trouble in finding it and sometimes go on the wrong trail or get lost. It seems the change from the state of life to that of death is considered to be sudden and extreme and the soul (especially that of an elderly person) on its being parted from the body is more or less in a state of shock or partly stupified and therefore needs people's assistance.

775 764 533 People always wished the souls of their friends to go to the sunrise land; by always directing them in that direction there was more chance of their going as they wished.

The singers strike the ground with short sticks as they sing and move very slowly forward. The words given in one of the old death chants (probably the oldest one) collected by me are as follows:

589 "You are the same as a piece of a mountain, you are a piece broken off the mountain, pieces break off continually and will continue to break off until there are no more and all is flat. This mountain thou art a piece of it, thou art the same as a piece broken off. Pieces will break off until all is flat. Now you will stand well <u>kátcéde</u>, (the corpse or soul is here addressed by the name of his clan or phratry) We are going to sing for you and we will make it well for you. Now thou stand good, <u>kátcéde</u>, thou art in a good position. I'm going to make a song for thee, I will sing good for thee."

775 764 533 Then the singers lifted their sticks and

pushed them out or pointed them to the East, at the same time singing "Yana's. This way is the trail. This way it goes. Don't miss it. The trail goes right to the east where the sun gets up". It is claimed there are four death chants in use. Two of these are said to be very old and the other two not quite so old. 775 764 533

It may be noted that although the Tahltan claim this song to have originated in the Tahltan country and the air to be purely Tahltan, still they say the words of the song are generally in the Tlingit language; sometimes however Tahltan words with the same meaning are used. [191]

The corpse was laid out and wrapped in a skin blanket which was tied in place with ropes encircling the body. Some of the things belonging to the deceased which were to be burned with him were placed near the body. 764

The corpse was kept in the house for one or two days or occasionally longer. It was taken outside when the pyre was ready and soon afterwards burned. When the body was to be removed, the pole or poles (one or two) used for carrying were passed through the ropes binding the corpse. They were considerably longer than the latter, extending beyond the feet and head. Men held the ends of the pole in front and others the end at the back. A hole was made in the side of the lodge

sharply along them as if blowing something away. At the same time he prayed, "May these children be healthy and strong. May they never be sick". It is said this ceremony was for the purpose of removing (gathering together and then blowing away) all evil from the children. 764 783

A peculiar custom in vogue was as follows: If the deceased was a child and the mother wanted to have it reborn by herself, she had a string tied around her waist, the other end of which was attached to the head or foot or sometimes other part of the corpse. Brush (balsam twigs or any kind of brush) was spread to the hole in the lodge (through which the body was removed) and the string from the corpse passed along the brush. A number of pointers, consisting of short sticks were erected along this path with their ends leaning in the direction of where the mother was. These were to help the soul or ghost to follow in the desired direction. Corpses were generally burned in the day time. Part of the string would burn up during the night or early morning. The woman's husband now cut the string close to his wife. The long part of the string was burned and the short part was allowed to remain attached to the woman for four days. It was then removed and burned. If the mother did not desire to have the child come back in herself, she might select a married daughter 765 775 [764]

765 775 for the purpose and, if she consented, the string was tied to her. Women sometimes desired that adult relatives who died should be reborn by them. Thus a married sister or other relative would desire to have a brother or a sister reborn by them. Strings were tied to them in the same way.

764 When a person was burned there were always some goods burned with him. If a man, he had some clothes, moccasins, kettles, weapons and food burned with him. It is believed that all these things were required by a man to use when travelling on the trail to the spirit land.

587 782 764 If the deceased was a wealthy man and possessed slaves one or more slaves were killed at his death. Their bodies were not burned but thrown away some distance or more often thrown in the river or in water. If the deceased had been a kind man and fond of his slaves he told the people before his death "Do not kill any of my slaves", and none were killed. They became the slaves of his heir.

If the man had been fond of his slaves and he thought they would not be treated very well by his heir, he requested that they should be liberated at his death, which was done.

769 782 No dogs were killed when their masters died, and there was no custom of relatives of a deceased

of them overlook lakes, streams and villages. Not all 764
are in prominent or high places; some are to be met with on low or flat land, especially near trails. Many of the modern graves since burial came into vogue are surrounded by fences. A very few graves have short mortuary columns with or without carved totemic figures. These have probably been adopted from the Coast. Small dolls are to be seen in some grave-houses; some of these appear to have been bought from Whites. They may have been dolls of children buried there.

It was expected that on the third day (or 764
about three days) after the burning of the corpse, 775
numerous ghosts would come around to get the spirit of the deceased or to search for it. Therefore at this time a single eagle feather was hung at the top of each house door or doorway to keep them out. These feathers were kept hanging for two or three days. No rattles or strings of hoops were used to keep away ghosts. No juniper or other strong smelling plants or evergreens were burned or used in other ways to keep ghosts away. Places where corpses have lain or graves or depositaries of the dead were not swept with branches of the rose or other trees.

All close relatives of a deceased person cut 765
their hair shortly after the death of the relative. From the time of the relative's death until the hair

765 is cut they frequently sing songs in which they mourn the death of the deceased. After the hair is cut they sing no more. The hair was cut by some at about level with the top of the shoulders. Others who did not have very long hair cut it across level with the lobes of the ears. The Tahltan narrate the origin of the custom of cutting the hair as a sign of mourning.

Widows lived apart from the people in little shelters or lodges a short distance away from the other houses. They blackened their faces so the tears could be seen when they cried. Formerly people cried a great 765 deal when a relative died. They cried very much althoug 775 they knew it was not right to do this. Crying made the trail wet and slippery and difficult of travel. For this reason souls did not desire much crying. Crying had the same effect as rain here on earth, which causes the creeks and rivers to swell and makes the ground wet and slippery. At the present day people say crying makes the steps slippery that the dead have to climb. 765 Nowadays people cry but little when a person dies. For the first two days of her isolation a widow had to continue lying on one side. She must not turn over. During this time she was covered entirely with a blanket and fasted. [115] On the second day a woman of the opposite phratry brought her some food on a large flat stone. On the same stone was a number of small stones or peb-

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

respect to beaver is partly explicable in terms of the animal's habit of remaining and reproducing within a relatively circumscribed district unless population pressure forces migration of the excess stock. Thus in most years Indians could depend upon being able to find food wherever beaver lodges were known to exist.

Of movable goods a man owned the bark and wood dishes, as well as the eating utensils which he made for his family, his own tools, caches (but not the food upon them), personal clothing, canoe, weapons, toboggan, personal snowshoes, and masks. A woman owned the bark- and spruce-root vessels that she manufactured, personal tools, the dwelling, food, prepared skins, personal clothing, all lines except those which she had given to her husband, and paints. Meat on a cache or freshly killed game cannot be considered the exclusive property of either the hunter or his family because the community felt and exercised a claim on such food. Failure to meet this expectation in the case of large game animals aroused resentment. In a sense children owned their toys as well as personal clothing and snowshoes. The mother controlled a child's possessions but they could not be disposed of outside the family, even by lending without the child's permission. By virtue of the control which parents claimed over a young person's nominal possessions they were able to use the latter freely. Although death might be followed by the destruction of some goods belonging to the deceased the custom did not have as its purpose transmission of wealth to the ghost. In the absence of grave goods people did not conceive of the ghost as owning anything. Even the burial clothes worn by the corpse "belonged to nobody."

Aside from one's name, ownership did not attach toward intangible goods. Nobody exercised individual control over songs or folk tales but it is likely that every man enjoyed some exclusive rights over the magical songs which he had dreamed on the vision quest.

Inheritance norms pertained to names and material goods alone.[24] Following death one half of a man's possessions went to his brother while the children divided the other half. Personal items were destroyed. A son usually acquired the scalps taken in battle. The widow might receive a share of the goods to which her brother-in-law enjoyed paramount rights, but her inclusion in inheritance does not appear to have been rigorously enforced. A man could marry his widowed sister-in-law or else could dispose of her to another husband but it is probably incorrect to list this pattern in a discussion of chattels. A woman's wealth fell to the widower, who customarily gave all or most of it to his brother's wife. The knife employed to sever the umbilical cord became the property of a woman's daughter.

---

a lot of trouble between different tribes is started, also amongst the tribe itself." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 9.) Among the Tsapagotena (Beaver Indians of Fort Liard, perhaps the same group to which McLean refers), "when an Indian discovers one or more beaver lodges, if not already appropriated, he immediately puts his mark upon them, and no one dares to intrude upon his property without his permission, although I know of no punishment inflicted upon the guilty party unless it be the infamy attached to the action, which is considered as very mean and heinous." Keith, *Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie* (1890), 69.

[24] For the inheritance of names see below, p. 141.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

888 turally recognized as the end of the child-bearing period a woman knew that old age was at hand. The thought saddened her. Sometimes such a woman began to act youthful and sought to attract a young lover or husband. Very old people, when they became unable to walk, were sometimes abandoned alongside the fire with a large pile of wood. This usually happened in autumn. Then when the snow had crusted the people returned to bury the bodies that they found awaiting them. Often, however, the aged, like the blind and lame, were carried or drawn upon a toboggan.

761 The Kaska recognized several interrelated causes of death. People who exerted themselves, killed themselves, or suffered accidents like drowning, died of so-called natural causes. However, it was not improbable that sorcery had made them vulnerable to injuries or depression. Many deaths followed from malevolent magic as well as from the violation of avoidances like an incest rule. Finally, as we will see, the ghosts could take life. Illness, as already stated, represented the temporary alienation of the soul or wind (tajuc) from the body. Death on the other hand represented a permanent rupture between these entities. The wind, described as "just like" the photograph of a person, did not die but continued to exist in an afterworld from which it might return to be reincarnated. In addition death represented the loss of the shadow (mezi). This did not leave the earth but remained around the scene of death or at a burial place. At night the shadow sometimes manifested itself as a ghost (tsune).

● 775 There were several afterworlds about which informants remained vague. Up in the sky lay the realm reserved for the souls of the good where people spoke a language different from that employed on earth. Here the winds spent the time in play and eating but they did not hunt. To reach the sky the soul followed a trail leading across a clear country where its tears created a great river that presently blocked further progress. Only by restraining its weeping could the soul lower the waters and thus continue the journey until it came to a narrow passage guarded by two great swans. When they saw the deceased they cried out, "Person coming!" "Then God [Tenatiia] [177] takes them in," the informant added.[21] The description of the afterworld reserved for the evil sounds very much as if it had been influenced by Christian teaching. No other explanation accounts as well for the presence of animals that are not indigenous to the Cassiar. In this realm the souls of the wicked suffered constantly. Snakes crawled around the individual; bad animals troubled, fought, and frightened him. "Elephants picked him up on their tusks and sharks with their teeth scraped the skin from his body. In all this torture the soul was never killed [i.e., the torture never terminated?]."

[21] The Tlingit realm of the dead is described as "an entirely happy region, elevated above the plane of this world." On the other hand we read that there were three such regions, one lower than the other. Below the world still another afterworld existed for the drowned. Bad people went to "Raven's home." (Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* [1908], 466.) Jones says that the soul or "shadow" quit the body at death to go "If the person dies a natural death and was not a slave . . . to the happy region of the spirits which is thought of as being in some remote part of the earth; if he die in war, then it goes to dwell in the sky; if drowned, then it descends to a region below the plane of the earth, provided the body is recovered, but if not recovered it is captured by Goosh-tá-kâ' (Land-otter Man) and taken back into the woods." Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* (1914), 234–235.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

Indians who drowned entered neither of these afterworlds but turned into fish.[32] People who committed suicide also ended up in a distinctive realm but no informant could describe this beyond the fact that it was "a black place" and an abode of the "devil." Suicide, usually by hanging, might follow a period of extreme anger or a bitter quarrel. 775 [762]

The wind enjoyed only a single reincarnation. Informants did not agree as to whether the souls of the good or evil returned to life. One man said that by means of reincarnation the wind of a wicked person received "another chance."[33] Following rebirth, death became final so that the man who did evil during his second life not only went to the devil but remained there for eternity. Testimony of reincarnation came through a child saying, "I know this country. I been here before." According to one man, "My boy [aged ten] says this. 'First time I'm dead. Now I'm born again. I come back this country. I try again!" (X).[34]

As already brought out, the shadow remained, for a time at least, around the death camp or the body's burial place. In apparitions the ghost's color seemed black. Apparently a ghost largely devoted itself to punishing relatives who had treated the deceased meanly during life. Sometimes ghosts sought "partners," particularly girls. They called prospective mates by name and to hear one's name called in ghostly fashion portended death. The younger siblings of a deceased child exhibited particular vulnerability to such solicitations. Sometimes ghosts threw stones, trying to hit a living person. When they succeeded the victim would die. Although regarded as an omen of impending death, it is not clear whether ghosts spoke through the cracking fire.[35]

All the "relatives" (i.e., members of the same moiety) in the vicinity visited the bedside of a dying man, wept with him, and shook his hand. They felt that in all liklihood they would never see him again. The company remained assembled until death occurred. Without receiving any change of raiment the body was then wrapped in a robe with the hands always open. For the fists to be clenched promised death to the next of kin. However, the eyes were closed; "otherwise he looks to see if another relative 763 764

[32] "It is believed that the spirit of the drowned is caught by the land-otter and dragged into his hole, and there it is turned into . . . the native hobgoblin, or ghost of the woods. On account of this superstition, drowning is considered the worst calamity that can befall one, especially if the body is not recovered." Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 165.

[33] That the evil dead should be reborn sounds reasonable and has been reported for the Kutchin. Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 140.

[34] Kutchin children gave similar testimony. (Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* [1936], 140.) The Tlingit "believe that the soul transmigrates from relative to relative, but not from man to animals. For instance, if a nephew dies who has borne some peculiar mark (perhaps a birthmark) on his person and an aunt should afterwards give birth to a son who was similarly marked, it would be fully believed that the newly born was none other than the departed nephew and his name would be given to the child." Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 234; see also Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 463; Drucker, *Cultural Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 230.

[35] The Tlingit believed that spirits of the deceased communicated with the living through cracking in the fire.Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 461.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

A widower also had to remain single for a time. No visits took place to the burial ground. People avoided that area because of their fear of ghosts. 768

Beigaben remained conspicuously absent, objects being neither burned nor buried with a corpse. After the body had been disposed of the deceased's clothing, to which the ghost might be attached sentimentally, together with the dwelling in which death had occurred, were burned. Informants said that the destruction of the house helped to get rid of the illness lurking there. We are not certain in our mind if this statement represents an awareness of contagion, nor if the explanation has been derived from European sources. Certain objects of the deceased like knives, unworn clothing, arrows, snowshoes, and tanning tools were distributed as mementoes by a surviving brother. Close relatives shared in these goods. Food left by the deceased went to the opposite moiety, probably in the death feast.[46] It is by no means clear whether a dead person's name was regularly inherited at a memorial potlatch. Sometimes, at any rate such names did come to be assumed by the oldest surviving, like-sexed sibling (real or classificatory) or by a deceased's brother's son or sister's daughter. These heirs directed the potlatch which, coming about a year after death, terminated the period of mourning.

Dease River Kaska. Old men possessed enhanced supernatural power, their longevity being a result of "good living." Such a belief perhaps compensated them for the disabilities brought about by age. An informant claimed that the aged were never abandoned but provided with walking sticks that helped them keep up with travelers. When incapable of walking the old were carried on the backs of strong, young relatives and drawn on toboggans. Sometimes people delegated a young relative to fish and otherwise care for an oldster until the group returned with some meat. 888

The origin of death is given in a tale recorded by Teit as constituting Bear's revenge for the theft of fire. Had it not been for Bear's interference constant renewal of life would have been the rule.[47] Death denoted the complete separation of wind (tuntaj'uc) and body. The wind continued to exist in one of two afterworlds. The souls of good people went to "heaven" and "God" while the evil found punishment in the company of the devil. The informant volunteered little concerning life after death. Prompting elicited admission of a path leading to a large body of water that had to be crossed in a boat. Crow might have operated the ferry. Only good people enjoyed reincarnation, the wind returning to life in an infant of opposite sex.[48] The appearance of a ghost (tsunetsina) provided a frightening experience. 761 776 775

[46] Among the Pelly River people "the dead person's goods, if he has any, is packed up by the head of the family. That . . . of any value are cached, the rest is either thrown into the river or burned after a year or two. The valuable stuff is then divided amongst the relatives of the dead person . . . it would be given to the ravens if the dead person happened to be a wolf or vice versa." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 13.) The Tlingit destroyed food and property with the aim of sending it on to the deceased "who then actually received its spiritual counterpart." Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 431; see also 429–430.

[47] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 443–444.

[48] Among the Tahltan "there is a strong belief in the rebirth of souls. A deceased relative is often born again by a mother, aunt, sister, or other relative. . . . The dead go to three different places: a

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tsalona
Frances Lake

764 765 768 Everyone in camp assembled when death seemed inevitable. Long ago bodies were disposed of by cremation and the Tahltan continued the custom a long time after the Dease River people began to inter their dead in the ground. Coffins as well as any form of tree burial were denied. Members of the opposite moiety handled the corpse. Mourning rites included hair cutting but not mutilation. The dwelling in which death had taken place as well as most of the possessions left by the deceased came to an end by destruction, a practice designed to avoid illness.

761 764 765 768 *Tsalona.* Death followed when the wind deserted the body and journeyed to an afterworld about which the informant knew little. The corpse was cremated and the bones intered in a small pit about one foot deep. Anyone who had handled the corpse avoided food and drink for two days but no particular relatives were charged with this responsibility. Elevated cache and canoe burials could not be recalled. In mourning a widow cut short her hair, fasted for several days, and wore ragged clothing. At night she slept little, deliberateiy keeping herself awake by means of sharp sticks planted under her head. Her plans for remarriage demanded the approval of her brother-in-law [304] or he might wed her himself. Scarification, face blackening, and hair singeing were denied. A widower observed food and drink taboos but did not cut his hair.

Property destruction following death was denied.

774 761 775 *Frances Lake Kaska.* A person's wind or soul, located in the stomach, resembled the breath or the air that one inhaled. Just as breathing sustained life the loss of the wind (breath) produced death. The informant denied that there could be a temporary alienation of body and wind. The soul continued to survive after quitting the body and if it had belonged to a good man became reincarnated. Following death the ghost (tsune), which was always dangerous, remained in the neighborhood for a period ranging from ten days to a year. During this time it hunted, copulated with women, visited its birthplace, and completed any tasks that the deceased throughout his life had left uncompleted. In appearance the ghost resembled a living Indian but could only be seen and not sensed tactually. Ghosts also avenged themselves for injuries that had been sustained in life. To announce themselves they sometimes whistled. Knocking did not constitute a ghostly signature.

---

rather cool, dingy place underground to the west; a light agreeable place on the same level as the earth to the east; and a place above in the sky. Only people killed in battle go to the last. Sometimes they come out, and dance as the aurora. When the latter consist of red clouds, people say there is a war somewhere. When the streamers of the aurora descend, forming a kind of chute, it is said that the spirits are receiving a brave warrior whose soul ascends through this chute, and is borne away as the streamers ascend. The sky heaven is said to be the best abode. That to the east is somewhat like this earth, but better in so far as food is always abundant. Most people go to it. They have to descend a slippery hill, and cross a river. Some are afraid, and turn back to be reborn again, or wander about until they reach the place of shades in the west where conditions are not as good as in the other places, and food is often scarce. Teit, *On Tahltan (Athabaskan) Work* (1912), 486. Cf. Speck, *Naskapi* (1935), 51, who also speaks of the dead appearing in the northern lights.